

a1 dissemination is critical. For example, the positions of friendly and potentially hostile military assets may need to be quickly distributed to decision-makers in the field. However, such decision-makers may have various clearances related to their service association, alliance affiliation or nationality and the like. In an era of active international police efforts, the need to simultaneously share information and protect national security interests is particularly challenging and important. Manually reviewing volumes of messages against a complicated array of sanitization rules is time consuming and impractical for certain applications. Moreover, manual administration of rules introduces an undesirable element of human subjectivity and inconsistency into an area where uniformity is of paramount importance.

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**Please replace the first paragraph in the "Summary of the Invention" with the following:**

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a2 The present invention is directed to a machine-based method and apparatus (collectively "utility"), for sanitizing messages based on stored sanitization rules. The utility can quickly and accurately apply the sanitization rules thereby accelerating the distribution of messages. In addition, the utility can apply a variety of rules depending on the context of a message, thus providing particular advantages in an MLS environment. The utility can also analyze messages with a high degree of resolution to maximize transmission of clean information while protecting sensitive subject matter. Moreover, the utility can flexibly handle a variety of source formats, including imaging and text formats, as well as a variety of target formats without undue delays associated recompiling and the like.

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**IN THE CLAIMS:**

**Please amend Claim 1 to read as follows:**

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- a3 1. (Amended) A method for use in a multi-level secure system for sanitizing a message, said multilevel secure system including at least first and second security levels wherein first security level users are authorized to receive sensitive information that second security level users are not authorized to receive, said method comprising the steps of:
- establishing a computer-based sanitization tool for sanitizing messages based on